



## TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMISSION

CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

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**TO:** Transportation Safety Commission Members, City Council Members, City Manager Kurt Hodgen,  
Assistant City Manager Evan Vass

**FROM:** Thanh H. Dang, Environmental Specialist

**DATE:** August 19, 2008

**RE:** Transportation Safety Commission Agenda for August 7, 2008 Meeting

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The Transportation Safety Commission met on Thursday August 7, 9AM, at the City Municipal Building, 345 S Main Street.

Members and Advisory Members Present included: Bill Blessing (Chairman), MPO Greg Deeds, Sgt. Felicia Glick, Drew Williams, Sgt. William Keller, Calvin Ferrell, Doug Stader, and Thanh Dang.

*Citizens are always provided the opportunity to voice their views/concerns about any item before the commission. It is the policy of the Commission to move the agenda item to the beginning of the meeting when citizens attend Commission meetings to avoid detaining citizens for the entire meeting. However, any citizen is welcome to stay for the entire meeting.*

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### Welcome

Ms. Dang shared with commission members an email from Councilman Charles Chenault expressing his appreciation for the Commission's work.

### Old Business

1. Railroad Crossing at S Main Street and Country Club Road – Ms. Dang reviewed the progress made concerning the railroad crossings at South Main Street and Country Club Road, to improve the crossing for increased bicyclists and motorcyclist safety. On August 30, City staff members from Public Works and Community Development, Councilman Charles Chenault, Tim Amos from

Norfolk Southern, Denise Martin (citizen), and Thomas Jenkins (citizen) met. Improvements proposed and agreed upon by attending parties included

- a. S Main Street – removal of chair rail, installation of polycorp filler, asphaltting to top of rail, improving shoulders by extending them at the crossing
- b. Country Club Rd – constructing bike paths to cross the tracks perpendicularly and bringing the path back to the road via a bicycle lane/wide shoulders

This proposal suggested that the City be responsible work associated with extending the shoulders on S Main Street and constructing the bike paths, as well as assisting with road closure to complete work on S Main St. Approval of these concepts by Scott Snow, Norfolk Southern and City funding sources still pending.

Sgt. Glick said that multiuse paths were still needed along the Country Club Road corridor to accommodate pedestrians, especially children, from Country Club Court, Harris Gardens, the trailer park and from the new Smithland and Skyline Schools on Linda Lane. Mr. Williams explained that City staff is aware of these needs and has worked on plans with the adjacent property owner/ developer, but improvements are not expected to happen until the property is developed. Chairman Blessing asked what the timeline is. Mr. Williams answered it is uncertain at this time, maybe 5 years.

2. Hartman Drive, 3<sup>rd</sup> St, Rockingham Drive Trail – Ms. Dang gave an update that the yellow line painted as suggested by the Commission.
3. E Market St & Evelyn Byrd, tight turning radius – Ms. Dang gave an update that the intersection turning radius has been corrected with additional paved area.
4. Prohibiting left turns at intersections off Port Republic Road – Ms. Dang presented to the Commission several Collision Diagrams illustrating the collisions occurring along the Port Republic Road corridor between Main Street and Devon Lane. Ms. Dang explained that most of the accidents occurred as a result of a left turning vehicle, sometimes the vehicle turning left was involved in the accident, sometimes the vehicle turning left caused rear end collisions behind it as cars came to a stop.

Commission members discussed that there was no alternative route when traveling westbound on Port Republic Road to enter onto Bradley Dr or Hunters Road.

There was discussion on how it is difficult to analyze the data and diagrams contained within a large number of collision/accident reports. A commission member asked if staff could bring to the next meeting information on the total number of crashes resulting from left turns and rear end collisions out of the total number of accidents.

The Commission at this time agreed again that from a safety perspective that left turns into and out of non-signalized entrances and intersections on Port Republic Road should be prohibited. And also recognizes that to prohibit such movements, alternative routes need to be provided.

This issue will be reviewed further by staff and the Commission.

5. Ingress/Egress on Vine Street at East Market Street Sheetz/Chamber of Commerce – Accident Reports review – Ms Dang presented Collision Diagrams to the Commission. Between February 1, 2007 – January 31, 2008 there were a total of 8 accidents between East Market Street and the Sheetz entrance on Vine Street, 5 of those 8 accidents occurred at the intersection of E Market and Vine.

Commission members discussed that vehicles exiting the Chamber's entrance have good sight distance. Sgt. Keller suggested turning Country Club Road into a cul-de-sac to remove the difficult intersection, but Commission members agreed that it would be unrealistic to do so with the new schools opening on Linda Lane, and the increased strain Country Club Roads closure would put onto side streets.

Several commission members requested that Ms. Dang email them the 8 accident reports for their continued review.

At this time, the Commission still recommends barriers on the double yellow line to prevent both the Chamber of Commerce and Sheetz traffic (at non-signalized entrance) from making left hand turns.

6. Waterman Dr & Chicago Drive Intersection – No Updates
7. Traffic Accident Data – Review – No further accident reports or collision diagrams were reviewed. Ms. Dang will email the Commission reports and diagrams for review before the next meeting.

#### **New Business**

8. Denton's building parking lot and Southwest corner of Court Square – pedestrian safety concern regarding blind corners (Review requested by MPO Greg Deeds) – MPO Deeds described blind corners at this entrance and close encounters between pedestrians and motorists. There are no reports of pedestrians actually being struck.

The Commission recommended that Public Works explore the opportunity to improve pedestrian path delineation (with planters or bollards), or other safe alternative. Public Works staff will explore options and bring back a report at next meeting.

9. Dedicated Turn Signals north/south lanes of Evelyn Byrd Ave/ Neff Ave and Evelyn Byrd Ave/ University Blvd. (Review requested by MPO Greg Deeds) – *Note: A dedicated left hand turn*

*signal was added on Evelyn Byrd traveling northbound between the time the request for review was made and this meeting.*

Public Works staff will further explore the intersection of Evelyn Byrd Avenue and University Blvd.

10. Additional crosswalk on E Market St at Linda Lane. (Review requested by Sgt. Felicia Glick)

Sgt. Glick expressed concerns for pedestrians crossing at the intersection at E Market St and Linda Ln/Burgess Rd. Sgt. Glick has observed a pedestrian crossing on the west side of the intersection between the Holiday Inn and Shoney's Restaurant, where there is currently no painted crosswalk.

Ms. Dang and Mr. Williams explained that to install a crosswalk at this location would not be safe, and that pedestrians are encouraged to cross E Market St on the east side where there is an existing crosswalk for the following reasons: 1) Conflicts with vehicles entering E Market St from the interstate and weaving movements, 2) A crosswalk would be within the Limited Access Portion of the interstate, 3) The roadway is very wide and there is not an opportunity for a median pedestrian refuge, and 4) Concerns about dual right turns from E Market to Burgess Rd.

Chairman Blessing asked if there have been pedestrian movement counts in this area. Mr. Williams said that there have been none to date. Conducting pedestrian movement counts requires that a person (whether in house or hired) count pedestrians for a full 8-hour period.

At this time, the Commission does not recommend adding an additional crosswalk to this intersection.

11. VDOT Highway Safety Improvement Program funding opportunity– Letter of Support needed (Requested by Thanh Dang)

- a. E Market St Sidewalk between University Blvd & Evelyn Byrd
- b. Grates for at grade crossing on W Market St

Ms. Dang shared with the Commission the concepts for the projects. Ms. Dang will draft a letter for each grant application for Chairman Blessing to submit.

12. Intersection of Vine and Washington Streets (Requested by Laura Quass-Ferdinand, 530 Viewmont Court)

Chairman Blessing presented a letter from Ms. Quass-Ferdinand expressing concern about this intersection as it has become increasingly busy.

Although traffic counts have been completed, Public Works staff were unable to complete the traffic signal warrant study for this meeting. Chairman Blessing will inform Ms. Quass-Ferdinand

that the study is being completed and Ms. Dang will present results to the Commission at the next meeting.

### **Other Business**

MPO Deeds reported that Capt Gregory requested that the Commission and Public Works staff explore whether an all red, pedestrian phase for the traffic signal could be programmed 20 minutes before and after school to assist the crossing guard for Waterman Elementary School at that location. Ms. Dang and Mr. Williams will discuss with Traffic Engineering staff and present a report to the Commission at the next meeting.

Mr. Stader presented data on the Staunton Region Motor Vehicle Fatalities by City and County between January 1 through July 31, 2008. He stated that there has been an overall decrease in fatalities in Virginia. Motorcycle fatalities area also down compared to last year.

Mr. Stander passed out motorcycle education materials to Commission members.

### **Next Meeting: Thursday September 4, 9am, at 409 S Main Street, Department of Planning Community Development Classroom–**

Traffic Engineering staff presentation on Traffic Light Synchronization at next meeting

### **Adjourn**